

Conscience Project Meeting Minutes: 9-25-10

The meeting was conducted at Ethna's home. Present were Ethna, John and Matt.

The minutes from the previous meeting 6-19-10 were reviewed and accepted.

Although Jere could not attend our meeting, he had prepared a submission entitled "Medical Schools, Students and the Conscience Policy" for **Conscience Chronicles**. In his submission Jere reviewed and applied ideas put forth in Wicclair MR. Conscience-based exemptions for medical students. **Camb Q Healthc Ethics**, 2010 Winter; 19(1):38-50. [PubMed PMID: 20025801](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20025801/). Matt and Meg agreed Jere's submission should appear on **Conscience Chronicles** as soon as he could make some minor typographical corrections Meg had detected. Copies of Jere's article were distributed to those present.

An update was provided on our efforts in promoting awareness and encouragement for uses either of *Lafracoth* with Deb's illustrations or the current version available on **Conscience Works**. For this purpose, one hardcopy with Deb's illustrations had been made with two additional copies made from the that. Although Meg also could not attend our meeting (she was at an Indiana State Medical Association meeting), she conveyed the following. In August Meg had taken a hardcopy to show to members of the book club she attends and to ask for ideas. Meg also took the copy with her to the Poynter Center and left it with Professor M. Professor M. had agreed to look it over while considering who among colleagues at IU might harbor some interest. Ethna requested additional hardcopies of the illustrated version be made which she intended to show to Professor V. at Vincennes and Professor ND. at Notre Dame. Professor V. is already known to us by some of his work. Matt said he would be glad to prepare two additional hardcopies of *Lafracoth* with cover letters to prospective editors for Ethna. On behalf of himself and Deb, Matt expressed his gratitude to members of the Conscience Project, especially Meg and Ethna, for their ideas and efforts in promotion.

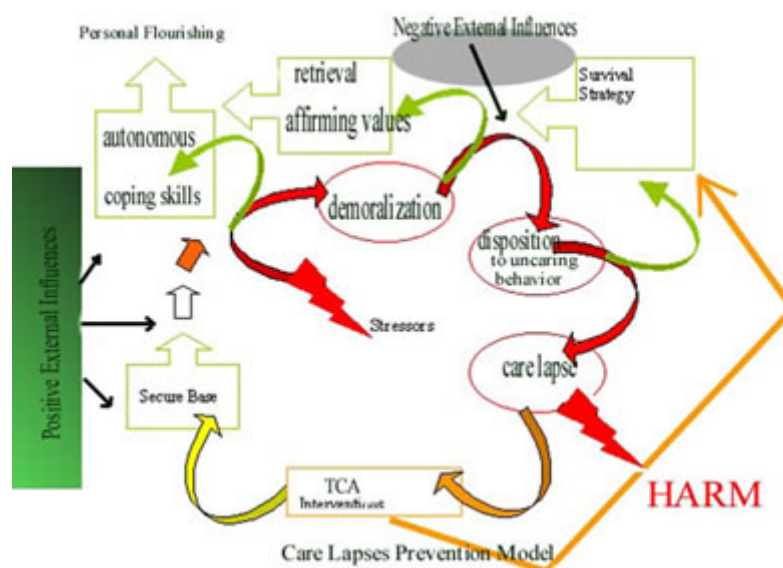
Matt announced that Charlie Shelton's latest book had recently been published. The book is: C Shelton (2010): *The Gratitude Factor, enhancing your life through grateful living*, Hidden Spring (Paulist Press); New Jersey. Charles Shelton SJ PhD has been friend and advisor to the Conscience Project since its inception. Matt said he hoped to provide a summary of Charlie's book for **Conscience Chronicles**. Matt also called attention to a volume edited by Daniel K Lapsley and Darcia Narváez (2004): *Moral Development, Self and Identity*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey. Contributions to the volume are in the form of a festschrift honoring Augusto Blasi. Matt had encountered passages in the contribution by Lapsley and Narváez entitled "A Social Cognitive Approach to the Moral Personality" expressing ideas (pp189-212) which seemed to Matt very congruent with those Joe had articulated at our last meeting. Joe had been discussing "filtering". The authors under consideration address research using The Spontaneous Trait Inference (STI) paradigm which assumes "the meaning of social events is constructed routinely, habitually, and unintentionally." The authors go on to characterize "moral chronicity [as] an individual differences dimension that influences social information processing." Matt also read excerpts from the concluding contribution to the volume (pp 335-347) by Blasi himself entitled "Moral Functioning: Moral Understanding and Personality," in which Matt discerned congruence with ideas represented in our recent discussion of value matrices, best reasons and basic motives.

Relevant to some of the excerpts read out and discussion of cross-cultural studies on moral development, Ethna remarked upon a recent convocation at a private high school with the theme "Our God is God of All" in which youth read prayers from diverse faith traditions including Hindu, Muslim,

Buddhist, Christian Protestant and Catholic. She also associated discussion of a moral dilemma presented in a review of the research to an experience at another school on Grandparents' Day in which a shy newcomer asked to join their party.

John's remarks involved using conscience as a guide.

There followed discussion of addictions (eg substances, sexuality, gambling and the Internet) and addictive personalities, and more generally, of personal predispositions to harm. There ensued a description of templates for personalized harm prevention plans, such as those with clinical utility in conscience sensitive group therapy and those with moral educational utility in conscience sensitive medical education (e.g. Introduction to Clinical Medicine) and appearing in the *Conscience Guide* as well as some of our articles:



Roadblocks to making the turn-a-rounds depicted in green above (that is, making efforts to right one's course by using autonomous coping skills and to retrieve affirmative values or goals) were envisioned. Among the roadblocks, Depression was seen as paradigmatic in torpedoing self-esteem. In this context, John reported on a program with the Chief of Chaplaincy at the VA Hospital entitled "Search for Meaning." He described how persons engaged in this program listed things they saw themselves doing, and goals they saw themselves accomplishing but could not secondary to the Depression. Hence a useful distinction between Depression and demoralization secondary to Depression could be made. In her turn, Ethna looked at the other side of the coin: Depression as a result of meaninglessness, or a failure to seek meaning. Ethna also remarked on other conditions besides Depression including mood dysregulatory disorders across the lifespan.

In passing, John remarked upon the keen interest sometimes taken by patients in whether, after a clinic visit, there would be any record made of positive change in their Global Assessment of Functioning (GAF) score because it might be used against them to reduce benefits.

There followed inquiries by Ethna directed to John about genuine help from/for spouses and support from/for families to improve the adaptation of returning warriors. The threat of redeployment to

recovery and restored functionality was readily recognized. There was discussion of “seamless transition programs” aimed at reintegration (in this connection John mentioned the work of L Harrison Reede MSW, LCSW). John also shared impressions of a conference sponsored by the North American Association of Christian Social Workers (NACSW) he had attended the day before (9/24/10): *Serving Military Personnel and Their Families: What Every Christian Social Worker Needs to Know*. John conveyed that-- irrespective of the title-- there was much valuable in the conference for any counselor. This conference included a panel discussion on “Battlefield Minds: Caring for the Spiritual Being of Returning Military Personnel and Their Families.” Major Jim Staggers Indiana National Guard was among the presenters. John recalled a particular remark made at the conference to the effect: if a person had experienced combat trauma and yet professed not to be changed as a person, in itself there would be sufficient cause for worry.

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Find **Conscience Works** at: <http://shaw.medlib.iupui.edu/conscience>

The next meeting of the IU Conscience Project will be hosted by Ethna at her home on Saturday 1/22/2011 at 10:00 AM to noon.

Respectfully submitted,

1-7-11

Edited for Conscience Chronicles 3/19/11

Matthew R. Galvin